



**DRAFT**

**SerVermont Commission Meeting  
4 December 2019**

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Stoweflake Resort & Conference Center Conference Room

**Members in Attendance:** Christy Gallese, Jason Gosselin, Megan McKeever, Nicole Whalen, Kate LaRose, Dan Noyes, Susan Cheeseman (ex-officio), Doug Kievit-Kylar (also from CNCS Regional Office: Liz Ron and Carol Schneider)

**Members in Attendance Via Phone:** Guy Isabelle

**Staff in Attendance:** Philip Kolling, Sharon Hearne, Robyn Baylor (attended to Conference details)

**Agenda**

- Welcome
- Approve Minutes - October 2019
- Public Comment
- New Data: Updating the Numbers
- Partners & Plans
  - AmeriCorps Competition and determine which applications get submitted to CNCS competition
- BREAK
- Discussion with CNCS representative (tentative)
- Upcoming events: January 2020 Meeting
- Adjourn

**1:00 pm Welcome, Introductions**

Phil welcomed everyone and lead round-table introductions (who are you and what constituency do you represent?). It was noted that this would be the last meeting for Jason and Doug as their terms expired. Thanks were expressed for their contributions as Commissioners.

**1:15 pm Approval of Minutes**

Phil opened discussion and sought approval of Meeting Minutes for October 2019. Doug made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Jason seconded the motion and the **minutes were given unanimous approval.**

**1:20 pm Public Comment Period**

None noted.



**1:35 pm New Data: Updating the Numbers**

Phil shared with the group a table describing Current Year Resouce Utilization (see on following page).



|              | 2019          |              |          |           | Slot       |            |           |            |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|----------|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
|              | MSY Awd.      | MSY Enr.     | MSY Unf. | % MSY enr | Slot Awd.  | Slots Fill | Slots Unf | Enrollment |
| VHCB         | 30.29         | 24           | 6.29     | 79%       | 34         | 24         | 10        | 71%        |
| LEAP         | 29.64         | 9.5          | 20.14    | 32%       | 52         | 10         | 42        | 19%        |
| VYDC         | 28.55         | 12.9         | 15.65    | 45%       | 39         | 14         | 25        | 36%        |
| CEDO         | 11.06         | 8.5          | 2.56     | 77%       | 17         | 10         | 7         | 59%        |
| ECO          | 24            | 23           | 1        | 96%       | 25         | 23         | 2         | 92%        |
| ReSOURCE     | 14.65         | 9.84         | 4.81     | 67%       | 32         | 13         | 19        | 41%        |
| VYCC         | 17.26         | 0            | 17.26    | 0%        | 43         | 0          | 43        | 0%         |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>155.45</b> | <b>87.74</b> |          |           | <b>242</b> | <b>94</b>  |           |            |
|              |               | 56.44%       |          |           |            | 38.84%     |           |            |

Phil reminded Commissioners that CEDO had been right-sized with regard to MSY owing to difficulty enrolling members. As such, CEDO was working to implement a Corrective Action Plan that specified that 100% of the full-time slots awarded should be filled by November OR that a specific plan be developed for how to fill such vacancies and that half-time slots be filled by February. CEDO is now at 77% enrollment. Admittedly, recruitment is a challenge both locally in Vermont and nationally. Additionally, Lyndon State (VYDC) was offered an additional 10 MSY (and given latitude in the 90% enrollment standard). Similarly VHCB was given the option to expand their program.

**1:45 pm Partners & Plans** (AmeriCorps Competition and determine which applications get submitted to CNCS competition)

Conflict of Interest forms were tendered to Sharon.

Phil next reviewed the AmeriCorps funding requests for 2020-2021. A synopsis of this discussion is presented in tabular form, below:

|                                          |                     | Requests 2020-21 (As of submission to SerVermont) |               |            | CNCS             |                                  | CNCS |  |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------|------------------|----------------------------------|------|--|
|                                          |                     | \$ CNCS                                           | MSY           | Slots      | Cost / MSY       | Cost / Mem.                      |      |  |
| Comp. Recompete                          | VYDC                | \$ 366,962                                        | 28.23         | 36         | \$ 12,999        | \$ 10,193                        |      |  |
|                                          | VYCC                | \$ 214,175                                        | 17.52         | 37         | \$ 12,225        | \$ 5,789                         |      |  |
| Comp. Continuation                       | VHCB (Fixed Amount) | \$ 393,588                                        | 30.29         | 34         | \$ 12,994        | \$ 11,576                        |      |  |
|                                          | ECO                 | \$ 335,822                                        | 24            | 25         | \$ 13,993        | \$ 13,433                        |      |  |
|                                          | ReSource            | \$ 223,897                                        | 14.66         | 32         | \$ 15,273        | \$ 6,997                         |      |  |
| New                                      | LEAP                | \$ 327,180                                        | 21.64         | 43         | \$ 15,119        | \$ 7,609                         |      |  |
|                                          | CEDO                | \$ 224,730                                        | 15.06         | 20         | \$ 14,922        | \$ 11,237                        |      |  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                             |                     | <b>\$ 2,086,354</b>                               | <b>151.40</b> | <b>227</b> | <b>\$ 13,780</b> | <b>\$ 9,190.99</b>               |      |  |
| <b>Funds Available</b>                   |                     |                                                   |               |            | \$ 20,000.00     | Max Form Prog. Cost MSY          |      |  |
| CONTINUATION funds                       |                     | \$ 953,307                                        | est.          |            | \$ 18,000.00     | Max Formula Prime Cost MSY       |      |  |
| Other Requests (Total)                   |                     | \$ 1,133,047                                      |               |            | \$ 15,479.00     | Max Amount Cost MSY Comp.        |      |  |
| Recompete Requests                       |                     | \$ 581,137                                        |               |            | \$ 15,479.00     | Max Total Cost MSY All Subgrants |      |  |
| Other Requests (New)                     |                     | \$ 551,910                                        |               |            |                  |                                  |      |  |
| FORM Grant                               |                     | \$ 700,000                                        | est.          |            |                  |                                  |      |  |
| ABOVE Available (Continuation + Formula) |                     | \$ (433,047)                                      |               |            |                  |                                  |      |  |
| Below Continuation + recomp + Formula    |                     | \$ 148,090                                        |               |            |                  |                                  |      |  |
| May also have some carry-forward         |                     | \$ 256,402                                        |               |            |                  |                                  |      |  |

Phil noted that CEDO is ahead of last year's total already, and meeting the additional benchmarks in their grant. CEDO was only at 28% at this point last year. ALSO:

- VYCC enrolls late.
- LEAP has 10 extra MSY added into their grant, so staff will be watching their progress with that in mind.
- ECO is same as this time last year.

Others are behind last year:

- VYDC 61% last year to 45% this year
- VHCB 86% last year to 79% this year
- ReSource 74% last year to 67% this year

With Commissioners having conducted their own personal review of grant applications Phil described the process to date and then sought to solicit Commissioner comments. Phil explained that Sharon had carefully reviewed all of the budgets and that she and Phil had reviewed and noted changes that needed to be made to the narratives. Commissioners were then charged with deciding which of the grant application to move forward and which (if any) would not be forwarded to CNCS for their consideration.

It was noted by Phil that LEAP and CEDO had not received competitive funding within the past five (5) years - that both programs had been funded with Formula monies.

Sharon offered that CEDO, since implementing the Corrective Action Plan, has submitted every monthly report, that enrollment has improved, and that the monitoring she had done also indicated improvement. Phil noted that CEDO was currently being investigated by OIG.

**Nicolle suggested that Commissioners first deal with the three (3) competitive continuation applications (ECO, ReSource, and VHCB). She moved that the grant applications for ECO, ReSource, and VHCB (with staff and Commissioner suggestions for editing made) be submitted for CNCS consideration. The motion was seconded by Christy and the motion was unanimously approved.**

Kate suggested that Commissioners next take up for discussion and consideration the four (4) new (new/previous grantee or recomplete) applications (LEAP, CEDO, VYCC, and VYDC).

#### **VYDC:**

Phil noted for Commissioners that the program is experiencing a cash-flow challenge, although the program itself is considered to be sustainable. Kate lead off the discussion by noting that the section describing the Theory of Change was a bit weak and should be strengthened. Phil said that such training was being planned by CNCS. Also, it would likely be beneficial if training was provided for curriculum design. Megan noted that the application was organized differently than other applications and questioned whether this was a good or a bad thing. Kate shared that she thought the problem statement was neither focused or clear (and that it was too broadly stated/comprehensive). Because the application focused on opioid misuse it was questioned whether this was an issue that CNCS still valued for funding. Phil said that he believed that, in particular, CNCS would likely look favorably upon sustaining pre-existing programs to address opioid misuse. It was noted also that evidence-based interventions for opioid misuse are widely available. It was recommended that staff cross check the staffing section with the narrative section for conformance (the Narrative included ONLY the program director). With regard to the section detailing Culture that Values Learning it was decided that in essence the section should explain how an organization utilizes data for learning and decision-making. There was widespread agreement that none of the applications submitted did this section adequate justice.

Nicolle posed the question to Phil, "What is the risk of submitting ALL of the grant applications for CNCS consideration"? Phil explained that CNCS preferred that Commissioners provide a robust review process of grant applications BEFORE submitting for CNCS consideration.

**Nicolle moved that the grant application for VYDC (with staff and Commissioner suggestions for editing made) be submitted for CNCS consideration. The motion was seconded by Megan and the motion was unanimously approved.**

Phil, looking ahead into the future, noted for Commissioners that:

1. With the expiration of two Commissioner's terms there will be the need to recruit new Commissioners,
2. SerVermont still is obligated to finalize a new State Service Plan, and
3. Commissioners need to consider and determine next steps.

After a brief discussion regarding how to solicit truly new grant applications it was noted that often a catalyst for applicants is a champion -- often an AmeriCorps alum -- to advocated for new programs. This being the case, it may be worthwhile to reach out to alumni for new grant applications. It was also noted that state data could be used to target identified "needs" that could then be considered for application of AmeriCorps member involvement.

#### **VYCC:**

It was noted that the interventions included in the application would be stronger if they focused on learning and skill development. Doug inquired about the robust match and Phil explained that he and Sharon were looking into what it was they included as match and whether it was appropriate. Phil described the differences between budgeted and statutory matches and noted that the organization needed a more sustainable match situation. He and Sharon will be following through on this.

**Kate moved that the grant application for VYCC (with staff and Commissioner suggestions for editing made) be submitted for CNCS consideration. The motion was seconded by Dan and the motion was unanimously approved.**

#### **LEAP:**

Kate explained why it was she thought that more information regarding the roles of staff members was needed. Phil noted briefly that the program utilized (SerVermont) staff input and assistance early in drafting the grant application.

**Christy moved that the grant application for LEAP (with staff and Commissioner suggestions for editing made) be submitted for CNCS consideration. The motion was seconded by Kate and the motion was unanimously approved.**

**CEDO:**

Megan noted that she felt that the application from CEDO this year was an improvement over the previous submittal, but...agreed with Kate and others that the Project Design was weak and needed improvement. A suggestion was made that the application was weak enough to possibly warrant beginning over again starting with the Logic Model being clearer on what it was that they measured and why they measure it as the measures included don't seem to logically address stated program goals. It was suggested that it might be helpful to read the application aloud in a room of partners/peers in order to solicit improvements beginning with "What do we need to accomplish in our community and what interventions do we need in order to do this"? It may be helpful to look at human-centered design ideas. It was felt that the interventions as specified may not have the intended or anticipated outcomes.

Phil noted for Commissioners that should they decide not to submit the application for competitive funding there was ample TTA monies to invest in capacity building and that should they decide not to submit the program would need to resubmit by April. It was stated that "It's not that we don't want to support CEDO but, rather, that we don't feel that the grant application is strong enough to compete successfully". Also, it was made clear that CNCS didn't want to consider seriously deficient grant applications -- which should be weeded out at the State level. It was likewise noted by Sharon that AmeriCorps members largely report having had a good and valuable experience. There seemed to be widely shared support for SerVermont interventions to strengthen the program...that included conversation and joint planning with program partners (in order to build greater buy-in by all involved).

**Kate moved that the grant application for CEDO not be submitted for CNCS consideration. The motion was seconded by Dan and the motion was approved with Christy abstaining.**

**Kate also moved that SerVermont staff approach CEDO in order to explore ways to strengthen the organization and its grant application for future submittal; to allow support for such an effort using reallocated carry-forward money -- up to but not exceeding \$100K; and that the process provide a per-diem to incentivize and allow program partners/host sites/members to participate in the effort. The motion was seconded by Nicolle and was unanimously approved.**

**Upcoming Events:**

- January 2020 meeting
- January 21 - MLK Day

**4:00 PM          Adjourn**

Respectfully Submitted,



Doug Kievit-Kylar  
Secretary